

The Decolonization Effects

Cultural Studies and/as Decolonization

Growing out of the histories of world-wide decolonization movements, Cultural Studies has become a major force continuing that critical intellectual tradition both within and outside academic contexts. Having persistently questioned cultural relations of power in local social formations for the past forty years, Cultural Studies is now undergoing a critical phase of internationalization. Such a transformation is occurring very much in response to the changing dispositions and structure of global forces such as transnationalisation of capital, and the realignment of the nation-states into regional super-states in the so-called post Cold War Era, as well as the implementation of the interconnected high tech systems such as satellites and inter-nets which makes talking across borders more possible. To be sure, using the umbrella term “globalization” to frame the newer development can not be disconnected from the history of colonialism and neo-imperialism, but is very much a product of it. It is increasingly felt and recognized by practitioners of Cultural Studies that local cultural production and consumption can no longer be adequately placed and analyzed without linking it to the global circuits constituted by the long-term historical trajectories of geo-politics and neo-colonial structures. A more collaborative, collective, and comparative intellectual practice may well be the possible mode of knowledge production to multiply the directions of know flow, and to better understand the changing shape of the worlds, if interventions in the global-local dialectic can be more effectively inserted.

Epistemologically and politically, Cultural Studies is much more prepared than any other intellectual tradition to pursue this difficult task. Cultural Studies, at least in the critical Althusserian-Gramscian-Foucaultian complex, has always recognized that “theory” is not a

universal set of formal propositions but an analytical weapon generated out of and in response to local-historical concerns. Cultural Studies insists on understanding historical contingencies and local specificities. Therefore, it never pretends to a universality of cultural analysis and openly acknowledges the relative autonomy of cultures in different geo-political locations. At the same time, the belief in producing organic intellectual work has put Cultural Studies in touch with the currents of social conflicts. Concerns of and interaction with social and political movements (anti-war, working class, subculture, counter-culture, women's, gays and lesbians, anti-racism, aboriginal, environmental, alternative media, national independence, etc.) have not only produced undeniable tensions which kept the energies of Cultural Studies alive, but forced Cultural Studies to recognize the "common" structures of domination: capitalism, patriarchy, heterosexism, ethnocentrism, neo-colonialism, etc. Although the specificities and intensities of oppression vary from place to place, gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and class have been the central coordinating categories across geographical, national, and regional boundaries. This critical vein of Cultural Studies has, at least in discursive practices, tried to maintain an internationalist spirit to combat the globalized multiple structures of domination together. In this sense, "Cultural Studies," rather than modeling itself on traditional academic disciplines of the past attempting to produce universal knowledge, can perhaps be more productively seen as an open-ended force field or a banner attempting to gather committed intellectuals to form an alternative international community to facilitate dialogues across national, sexual and racial/ethnic divides without sacrificing local trajectories.

The internationalization of cultural studies at this moment has been largely perceived as a new intellectual practice within the English speaking world, especially in the UK, the US, Canada, Australia, and perhaps less so with India, and even less so with the other English speaking (ex)colonies, such as South Africa, the Philippines, Singapore and Hong Kong which in fact have for some time now engaged with the cultural studies project, not to mention the long tradition of cultural criticism in various sites which prepare the coming of the sign, Cultural Studies. Indeed, if one positions Cultural Studies as part of a global decolonization movement, obviously critical cultural analyses and practices have been going on in different parts of the non-English globe. To break existing structures of intellectual production and to build a wider network of communities there have been projects which I have been involved with, hoping that the too often unattainable cultural analyses done outside the dominant knowledge production systems can be made available within and outside the marginal sites, through the established multinational publishing circulation channels. Though some of the results can be charged as "Asia-pacific-centric," the attempt is consciously made not to reproduce a

“postcolonial” resentment.¹ I am fully aware of the danger of “oceanic imagination,”² the shift from the “Atlantic” to the “Pacific,” which is part of the “imperialist globalization”³ project baked up by the Super States, APEC. But one does not have to essentialize the necessary belonging of “Asia-Pacific” as a postcolonialist and neo-imperialist operation; that will give up the power of geographical imagination to the Super States.

Decolonization and Its Discontents

Marxism, identity politics and decolonization

Increasingly, postcolonial studies has pushed us to the critical limit for the understanding that its politics at this moment of history are about decolonization. Strongly put, if postcolonial cultural studies still has any political edge, it is “decolonization” at different levels of abstraction and aiming at different axes of identity politics and different analytical sites. Much of the work done in the field has, however, concentrated on decolonizing the imperial centers. The seminal work of Edward Said, Gyan Prakash, Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy and the recent critical work such as Robert Young’s (1992) *White Mythologies*, Iain Chambers’ and Lidia Curi’s (1996) collection on “the post-colonial question” and Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay’s (1996) edited volume on the “questions of cultural identity,” have projected a necessary desire against “Euroamerica-western-centrism.” Beyond recognizing the power of these critical interventions, one cannot but ask what happens to the ex-colonies outside the empires, especially the non-English ones? Stuart Hall, in the 1996 Tokyo conference on “Dialogue with Cultural Studies” has openly acknowledged the over-privileging of the English colonial experiences. Publication of studies of colonialism in Japan, for instance, have been overwhelming in the post W.W.II era;⁴ it could be argued that the question of coloniality and postcoloniality has been the main preoccupation of post-war Japanese intellectuals. And because of the hegemony of the English language and the controlled circulation of publication, none of these grounded historical-cultural works have been read in different parts of the world. Further, the mainstream postcolonial move so far seems to operate on a politics of forgetting (the past as well the rest, other than the English ones) as if something genuinely new has just been discovered. While the body of Fanon was over-straddled, his predecessors Aimé Césaire and O. Mannoni, and his inheritors such as Albert Memmi and Ashis Nandy, especially the earlier anti-colonial or even “anti-westerncentric” figures in the Japanese, Indian, Korean and Chinese speaking contexts have been ignored: Kawakami Hajime and later Maruyama Masao, Tagore and later Gandhi/Nehru, Yi Tongsu and Kim Myongsik, Lu Xun and Yang Kuei,

among others; as if only the EuroAmerican writing tradition counts. In short, a whole body of discourses of decolonization generated outside the imperial metropolis from the 19th century onward somehow has to be re-articulated to re-build the “counter-colonial” tradition. As we anticipate this work, perhaps refocusing on the decolonization question as the key site of postcolonial studies could signal a step forward.

It is probably fair to suggest that the intellectual umbrella to initiate a global decolonization movement began with Marxism. For critical intellectuals in different part of the world, the resources of thought and the theoretical weapons did not simply come from the violence of colonial experiences, but also from the decolonization forces within the empire. I very much doubt there have been any other critical forces more influential than Marxism, both in terms of political practices and intellectual thought. The purpose here is definitely not to catalogue or inventory the success and failure of Marxism, but to situate it within the long term history of decolonization.

When European colonial imperialism reached its peak moment, partly triggered by the industrial revolution to outwardly expand capitalism, Marxism “discovered” capitalism and its historical agent for change—the working class (the founding moment of modern critical identity politics). This naming itself presupposed an enunciative position “outside” capitalism, in the name of socialism or communism. This future oriented politico-cultural imagination targeted a radical deconstruction of the empire by capturing its working logic, and went further to posit a utopian blueprint. This presence of alternative thought and the desire for a different world has then slowly accumulated within the imperial center for the subsequent century and half. Half a century later, the Russian revolution of the 1917 pushed forward the imagination. Marxist revolutionary theory, for the first time, had been “proved” not to be a day dream, and injected hope into the decolonization forces within the centers of the capitalist world. And more importantly, Marxism offered the anti-colonial movement in the colonies an alternative choice to capitalism. For better or worse, in success or failure, most nationalist independence movements had to negotiate the Marxist seduction. Although the statist politics of the first and second internationals proved to be reproducing certain feudal elements of its parts (i.e., the rigid structure of hierarchy), the cultural imagination of an internationalism lingers on. To re-evoke the Russian revolution today is obviously ironical: from the competition between two systems, to the formation of the “three worlds,” to the end of the Cold War, the socialist-statist castles (Cuba, China, Vietnam, North Korea, for instance) have been gradually sucked into the magnetic field of “global capitalism.” How is this episode of history to be written? The easiest way is to erase the entire century, as if it never existed. But from a different point of view, just like imperialism, Marxism has not yet been sentenced to death: its critical elements have been saturated into different geographi-

cal sites, and can always be called upon to deal with difficulty and uncertainty. Simply put, the tradition of Marxism has established an imaginary discursive position “outside” capitalism from which to critique the internal logics of the latter; these decolonization forces appear and reappear through articulation to other elements in different temporary/spatial contexts. Perhaps what is important is that once one jumps out of the burden of statist-nationalist socialism trap (that is, one no longer sees the capturing the state power as the ultimate goal) the sites of projection for Marxist desire become omnipresent, even minutely, though this understanding is only meaningful when decolonization is seen as a permanent silent revolution.

Let me emphasize here that for at least a century now, Marxism can no longer be seen as something coming from the outside and has become part of the cultural subjectivity of intellectuals outside the imperial centers. To claim Marxism is a property of the West is just like claiming that technology belongs to the essentialist West. What makes Marxism survive is precisely its heterogeneity and its articulation to the local intellectual histories.

On a theoretical level, the Marxism of the 19th century was never able to rid itself of its Eurocentrism, but in effect generated a whole series of decentering movements to be followed until now. Historical materialism, in its battle with idealism, had radically historicised human social activities and institution, and seen capitalism as a product of history and hence can be superseded; on the other hand, it inherited the evolutionary view of history from the enlightenment tradition, using the narrative of a universal proposition to cover the entire geographical spaces. It was precisely in this contradiction that universalism started to crack, beginning to loosen up the confidence of the Universal Subject. The birth of multiple resisting subjects of a micropolitics, gradually emerging on the historical platform, theorized a century later by the Foucaultian power/knowledge complex, was a necessary theoretical conclusion through a re-interpellation of Marxism mediating through Nietzsche’s hand. The whole series of “epistemological breaks” was unstoppable: capitalist class, first world, male, white, heterosexual, etc. could not escape the fate of being decentered. Capitalism, World System, patriarchy, racism, heterosexual regimes were then constantly “born,” which generated exploding effects, just as when Freud “discovered” the unconscious. To put it into the space of geopolitics, these parallel axes have been the historical trajectories of decolonization movements “internal” to the imperial centers. But once the trajectories cannot but be linked to the globalization movement forged by the history of imperialism, the symbolic articulation across geographical spaces transcended boundaries, and the local differences can no longer claim its absolute closure within the national space. That the feminist, Gay and Lesbian, bi-sexual and trans-sexual movements (somehow parallel to the earlier class movement of international communism) staged in the cen-

ter-cores have generated global effects of decolonization are cases in point.

If, in the imperial centers, movements of class, gender/sexuality, and race/ethnicity have been the critical effects of decolonization, presented in the form of identity politics, then outside the imperial centers, in the colonies and ex-colonies, the dominant practices of identity politics of decolonization have presented themselves in three interconnected forms: nationalism, nativism and civilisationalism. My central concern here is not to celebrate these decolonization moves; in recognizing the historical contingencies of the empowerment elements, I wish to pinpoint their critical limits so as to push the incomplete project of decolonization forward.⁵

Nationalism in question

Predicated on the inside/outside metaphor or, to use Fanon's expression, Manichean divide, colonialism driven by the forces of capital has in the process of its expansion established the structure of the nation-state as its mediating agent to unify the internal differences vis-a-vis outside colonizer. Once the system of the nation-state was established and imposed on the globe, the most visible mechanism for colonies to evacuate the outsiders/colonizers was the nation-building and state-making project. Third World nationalism, as response and reaction to colonialism, was therefore an imposed choice to declare autonomy from outside forces. With territories cut up by the colonial power throughout Africa, Latin America, and Asia colonialism saw the rise of nationalist independence movements not only as a threat but also as a means to reduce unnecessary cost as soon as it could maintain the colonial linkage to secure its market and political influence. As Ashis Nandy (1982: 1) succinctly puts it, In Manchuria Japan consistently lost money, and for many years colonial Indochina, Algeria and Angola, instead of increasing the political power of France and Portugal, sapped it. This did not make Manchuria, Indochina, Algeria or Angola less of a colony. Nor did it disprove that economic gain and political power are important motives for creating a colonial situation. It only showed that colonialism could be characterized by the search for economic and political advantage without concomitant real economic and political gains, and sometimes even economic or political losses. To let colonies go then might well be the right thing to do to be rid of one's responsibility. "Self-determination," a slogan heralded by younger generation colonial powers, proved to be not so much a humanist concern, but a political strategy to scramble up the already occupied territories in order to share larger piece of cake for "national interests." J.A. Hobson, as early as 1902, has discovered the close linkage between nationalism and imperialism. The latter cannot function without the former. By the 1940s, it had become clear that neo-imperial nationalism was in solid shape.

Aime Cesaire's intuitive statement at that time warned the third world intellectuals:

I know that some of you, disgusted with Europe, with all that hideous mess which you did not witness by choice, are turning—oh! in no great numbers—toward America and getting used to looking upon that country as a possible liberator.

"What a godsend!" you think.

"The bulldozers! The massive investment of capital! The roads! The ports!"

"But American racism!"

"So what? European racism in the colonies has inured us to it!"

And there we are, ready to turn the great Yankee risk.

So, once again, be careful!

American domination—the only domination from which one never recovers.

I mean from which one never recovers unscarred. (Cesaire, 1950/1972).

Here Cesaire had already pointed to the transition from colonialism to neo-imperialism, from territorial acquisition to "remote control." But for the sake of power third world nationalists did not seem to be bothered by the gradual formation of U.S. hegemony, and still struggle for the state independence through the "help" of the U.S. military and financial support. And the nation-state structure, finally implemented everywhere, proved to be the part of the neo-colonial system. With no better choice, to counter an offensive nationalist based colonialism, a defensive nationalism became the only unifying force opposing the colonizer.

In recognizing the almost inevitable historical necessity, one could not lose sight of the problems coming with nationalism. Shaped by the immanent logic of colonialism, third world nationalism could not escape from reproducing racial and ethnic discrimination, a price to be paid by the colonizer as well as the colonized selves. Fanon identified the problem in 1961: "From nationalism we have passed to ultra-nationalism, to chauvinism, and finally to racism... We observe a permanent seesaw between African unity, which fades quicker and quicker into the mists of oblivion, and a heartbreaking return to chauvinism in its most bitter and detestable form" (Fanon, 1968: 156-7). Furthermore, the ruling elites, in their struggle over state power to replace the colonial regime, have mobilized the pre-existing ethnic differences to their advantages, and ethnic essentialism has been the easy way out. It is then understandable that ethnic nationalism has, since the post war era, dominated the third world political scenes, a reproduction of colonialism of the earlier moment. How true was Fanon's critique of nationalism?

Twenty five years later, in 1985, *The South* and Vienna's Center for Development co-organized a conference, "Decolonization and After—The Future of the Third World" to review the diverse practices and experiences of decolonization, 40 years after national independence movements. Altaf Gauhar, a Pakistani writer and the editor of *The South* and of the *Third World Quarterly*, summarizes the situation in this by now often cited passage:

It did not take long for the people to discover that all that had been changed was the colour of their masters... independence brought little change and they remained chained to the same British-style institutions which the ruling elites manipulated and controlled to perpetuate their own advantages... For the masses the achievement of independence was the end of their struggle and also the end of their dreams... nationalism could not serve either as a cover to conceal economic and social disparities nor hold back the tides of regional autonomous pressures... when cultural homogeneity and truly national consciousness failed to evolve, people began to revert to the security of their traditional parochial and class identities... The seeds of disintegration in the sub-continent [of India] were all sown in the colonial period. They are now coming to bitter fruition. (Gauhar, 1987; cited in Kreisky and Gauhar, 1987: 4-5)

This passage coming from the third world by no means expresses a nostalgia towards the colonial regime nor aims to legitimate the history of colonialism, but it puts a sharp focus on what has happened since the foreign power has finally left: “internal colonialism” began with essentially the same logic of “external colonialism.” As Nandy forcefully put it, “the rhetoric of progress uses the fact of internal colonialism to subvert the cultures of societies subject to external colonialism,” and “the internal colonialism in turn uses the fact of external threat to legitimize and perpetuate itself,” but one has to understand that “neither form of oppression can be eliminated without eliminating the other” (Nandy, 1983: xii). The inside/outside metaphor becomes the alibi for the national bourgeoisie to continue colonial ruling, and has thus put us in a position to question the legitimacy of using color, racial and ethnic distinctions to justify any form of nationalist governmentality.

Nativism

Right before and after national independence, nationalism has generated a by-product: nativism. If, for centuries, colonialism has carried out a “civilizing mission” to empty out the “backward” local tradition, and replaced it with more “advanced” modernization programs on every front, then the anti-colonial, national independence movement could no longer trust anything coming from the side of the colonial devils. A “self-rediscovery movement” was called upon to discover our uncontaminated self and authentic tradition, to replace deeply invaded colonial imagination. If, to juxtapose Fanon with Nandy, colonialism works by the mechanism of identification, through aggression and establishing the colonizer as the figure of modernity, to bound colonizer and the colonized together, then nativism works by an identification with “the self.” Defined in relation to the “non-native” colonial master, “nativism” operates on every level of social formation. The official posts have to be first nativised; then it is followed by the changes of national flag and dress, the language, the curriculum, the textbooks, food, etc., though at gut level, the colonial ele-

ments still permeate and could not be vacuum-cleaned overnight. And in fact, the colonial imagination has permeated the native's body and thought. Albert Memmi documented and analyzed this nativist "self-rediscovery movement" so well in the last two chapters of his rather neglected seminal work *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1957), published 5 years later than Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), and four years before *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961). Listen to Memmi: "We then witness a reversal of terms..Assimilation being abandoned, the colonized's liberation must be carried out through a recovery of the self and of autonomous dignity. Attempts at imitating the colonizer required self-denial; the colonizer's rejection is the indispensable prelude to self-discovery" (p. 128). Thus, from the very beginning of the nativist decolonization, colonizer was the key initiator. Once the movement starts, "everything that belongs to the colonizer is not appropriate for the colonized... the rebellious colonized begins by accepting himself as something negative" (p. 138). The colonized then will choose to destroy anything built by the colonizer. As Memmi saw it, for the nativisation movement activist, "The important thing now is to rebuild his people, whatever be their authentic nature; to reform their unity, communicate with it and to feel that they belong...he is even more ardent in asserting himself as he tries to assume the identity of the colonizer" (1965: 135); "by taking up the challenge of exclusion, the colonized accepts being separate and different, but his individuality is that which is limited and defined by the colonizer. Thus, he embodies religion and tradition, ineptitude for technology of a special nature which we call Eastern, etc." (136). One could add on top of the colonialist category of the East and West, Confucianism, the Culture of the Continent vs. the Culture of the Sea, etc. Desperately seeking essentialist differences constitutes the foundational, if not fundamentalist, drive of nativism.

In short, if Fanon's critique of nationalism was ahead of its time, then we still live under the shadow of Memmi's critique of nativism.

The rediscovery of the self in is no ways bounded by the nation-state. It goes into any direction when a tradition of "difference" (from the colonizer) can be discovered. The contemporary movement of "Asianisation" (against the "West") of Asia, "Africanisation" of Africa (again, against the "Western" hegemony), or even "Europeanisation" (against "America") of Europe can be accounted for as a nativist move. The assertion and re-claiming of Asian, African or European values and of an Asian, African or European identity are not necessarily nationalist interpellation, but part of the nativist imagination.

Watch out for the Politics of Resentment!

If the cultural basis of colonialism is racism, and it generated an identification with the aggressor-colonizer, then can one say, the cultural basis

of neo-colonialism is multi-culturalism (which recognizes differences but covers up ethnicity/race/nationality as the nodal point of divides), it generated an identification with the self in the form of nativism and identity politics.

What reconnects and unifies nationalism, nativism, and civilisationalism is, what Memmi calls, to use psychoanalytic language, “resentment,” which bounds the (ex)colonizer and the (ex)colonized together. As I argued earlier, the inside/outside, self/other logic of colonialism lingers on in these three forms of decolonization, a constant resentment against the (past or present) colonial outsider and/or the imaginary other is still at work, which expresses itself in the form of racism. Memmi argues, “though xenophobia and racism of the colonized undoubtedly contain enormous resentment and are a negative force, they could be the prelude to a positive movement, the regaining of self-control by the colonized” (Memmi, 1965: 132; my emphasis). We surely hope Memmi is right that we could eventually leave the negative force, but the dominant historical conditions do not seem to take us beyond resentment. Nationalism is on the rise, nativism still prevails, and civilisationalism finds a fully fleshed life. Colonialism is imposed structure. From 1492 onward for four centuries, it has radically transformed the world. The political epistemology of colonialism builds itself on a rigid “inside/outside” distinction, the main axes have been race and ethnicity: color, language, accent, religion, etc. mark the divide between the colonizer and the colonized; these are also cultural categories which construct not only hierarchy but also unequal power relation. Sex, age and class in colonial relation were often metaphorized: colonizers are male adults with higher class positions and the colonized were seen as women and children with low class taste. The decolonization movement has deepened the understanding that it is not an inversion of colonialism, a continuation of imposed colonial modes of thinking and categories; the political epistemology of decolonization no longer puts priority on race and ethnicity within which sexual, age and class differences are subsumed; recognition of difference, erasing the hierarchical structure of differences and interiorize others are the principle of its political ethics; a position that I have termed elsewhere a “critical syncretism” (Chen, 1996).

Civilizationalism: East and West as colonial categories

The rediscovery of the self serves the function of empowering colonized subjects. A new form of “empowerment” seems to emerge, however, a form slightly divergent from the nativist movement. One of the most powerful articulations recently emerging in the historical scene is civilisationalism. It is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that, in the 1990’s, now only four years away from the year 2000, the most influential academic essay on earth is Samuel Huntington’s (1993) “Clash of Civi-

zations.” For better or worse, the U.S. right wing imperialist stand taken by Huntington has drawn responses from all over the places; throughout the continent of Asia, essays, conferences, books, policy consultations, etc. have been generated within (rather than outside) the Huntington problematic. The simple and easy cut up of the globe into seven or eight symbolic spaces has in effect constructed a new civilisational identification forcing everyone on earth to take on. The Huntington proposal to the U.S. state power, at the end of the essay, seeks to exploit conflicts so as to maintain world hegemony, which will no doubt, if state machines are bought into the Huntington problematic (which seem to be the case in practice), generate global racism, nationalism, and regionalism, not to mention reactionary civilisationalism.

In sharp contrast to the colonizer’s strategic mapping, the most articulate form of civilisationalism formulated by intellectuals in the (ex)colonized societies, as far as I know, comes from Ashis Nandy. In his recent book, *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism: Rabindranath Tagore and the Politics of Self* (1994), Nandy, who is a Delhi-based social psychologist, argues that nationalism is a by-product of western colonialism, and hence illegitimate. According to his reading of Tagore and Gandhi,

the fear of nationalism grew out of their experience of the record of anti-imperialism in India, and their attempt to link their concepts of Indianness with their understanding of a world where the language of progress had already established complete dominance. They did not want their society to be caught in a situation where the idea of the Indian nation would supersede that of the Indian civilization, and where the actual ways of life of Indians would be assessed solely in terms of the needs of an imaginary nation-state called India. they did not want the Indic civilization and lifestyle, to protect which the idea of the nation-state had supposed been imported, to become pliable targets of social engineering guided by a theory of progress which, years later, made the economist Joan Robinson remark that the only thing that was worse than being colonized was not being colonized (Nandy 1994: 3).

In other words, if Indian nationalism works on the level of the nation-state, civilisationalism operates in the larger historical space of Hindu civilization, which functions to resist being trapped into the colonial system of the nation-state. Nandy’s articulation was actually grounded in his earlier seminal work, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (1983), which was a self-conscious theoretical undertaking in the tradition of Fanon and Memmi.⁶ For him, unlike the Huntington aggression, what he calls “an unheroic but critical traditionalism” is to “contribute to that stream of critical consciousness: the tradition of reinterpretation of traditions to create new traditions” (1983: xvii-xviii). Traditions, and their reinterpretation become the empowering ground on which the long last cultural impact of western colonialism can be combated, because “The West is now everywhere, within the West and outside; in structures and in minds” (Nandy, 1983: xi).

Although the differences between the offensive right wing colonialist Huntington and the critical traditionalist of the left populist Nandy are clear enough, the civilizationalist interpellation has to be carefully cautioned.⁷ The Huntington-Nandy articulation discloses a wider structure of feeling, a cultural imaginary, not limited to the Indian or U.S. case. It perhaps projects an emerging realization in the so-called post-colonial context. That is, for the (ex)colonized, nationalism is no longer the panacea. Once magnified into global capitalism, the hierarchical structure of the nation-state more or less continues the established order of colonialism, with which one could not compete any more than with its forerunners; at this moment, perhaps only bringing out the “higher” and “larger” category “civilization” could seal the un-sealable scar. Inventing and reinventing signs familiar to the popular imaginary and then articulating them to a higher form of universalism is to regain the confidence of the civilization, to “at least” beat the West in cultural imagination. This is a perhaps one form of psychoanalytic identification of the “postcolonial” imagination.

I said the discourse of civilisationalism has wider ramifications; such articulation indeed exists in recent expressions like “cultural China” and even orientalism. In a way, the signs of “China,” “India,” “Islam,” and “the Orient” are not necessarily nationalist concepts, but emotional signifiers; to reclaim “a four or five thousand year history” is once again a reaction and response to, shall we say, “post” colonialism; it does not have concrete substance, but interpellates the scared subject to feel one can reside more safely in a world full of cultural identity crises. The danger here is of course that these so-called non-western big civilizations might fall into the logic of colonial competition, a struggle over representing the other of the west, to occupy the space of the non-west. A reproduction of ethnocentrism in structure? Isn’t the center still the opposing West? Isn’t there an exclusionary practice? Isn’t the appearance of the “North and South” divide, beyond political-economic levels, expressing a symptom on the psychoanalytic account? Surrounding these big civilizations, how the little subjectivities which do not have larger “civilization” to hang onto, or are now forced into an identification proposed by Huntington, to handle its destiny and feeling of marginalization? Let us read Sri Lankan anthropologist S.J. Tambia’s articulation of what I call the “little subjectivity” complex:

Notwithstanding their genial qualities, Sri Lankans are also apt to be proud and arrogant abroad: they feel superior to the Indians, the Malays, the Chinese, perhaps even the Japanese. For their eyes are set on the West, particularly Great Britain, which was their colonial ruler from the early nineteenth century until 1948. They are proud of their British veneer: their elites acculturated more quickly than their Indian counterparts; their island enjoyed a prosperity owing to its plantation economy that was the envy of its Asian neighbors; and the British raj established a school system and a transportation system that, because of the island’s size, was more efficient than any could possibly be in the vast subcontinent of India. And therefore, although India is

undeniably their parent in many ways, all indigenous Sri Lankans—Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim—become visibly annoyed, if not outraged, if Sri Lanka is mistaken physically to be part of India (as many people in distant parts of the world innocently do), or if it is thought culturally to be part of “greater India” (as some Indians patronizingly do). (Tambiah, 1986, p. 2)

That the cultural psychology Tambiah portrays reveals a general complex or sentiment of civilisationalism and little subjectivities is only unique in its specificity, but it resonates in other geo-colonial relations, if for instance one displaces the term Sri Lanka with Taiwan or Canada, India with China or the US, for instance. What I am getting at is that the Huntington interpellation has historical-psychic support. The real danger is Huntington’s U.S. imperialist articulation, to interpellate “civilizationalist” identity as an “upgraded” imperial nationalism.⁸ The Huntington Clash has already generated enormous antagonism from China and Southeast Asia; but, as far as I can tell, all the nationalist-civilizationalist reactions are sucked into his framing rather than challenging the framework as a whole.⁹ Those geographical spaces with no clear belonging to the bigger civilizations are now forced to take sides and are boxed in by the Huntington categories. Sites where there are potentials to be a more syncretic hybrid might change their directions. Australia used to claim to be “a multicultural nation in Asia”; but with the conservative government in power, the state identification has shifted toward a multicultural “western” nation in Asia.

What about the centrifugal core of the magnetic field? The west is also an emotional signifier. More precisely, behind the West hides also a racist concept, white; the west contains no unity except the color. Just like the east, at best it refers to another form of civilization; its floating signified changed historically according to the transformation of hegemonic positions: from Dutch and Spanish, through the British and French Empires, to the US neo-imperialism. Doesn’t “The fall of the West” and the subsequent claim that “21st century is x’s century” project a “postcolonial” desire?

Postcoloniality and Decolonization: Reclaiming Marxism

It is perhaps the time to sum up and address what decolonization and postcoloniality might mean in this historical conjuncture.

If, as I suggested in the beginning, postcolonial studies does not signify the announcement of the arrival of a postcolonial era, then its legitimacy lies in the positing of an ethical positionality beyond colonialism from which to rethink and re-examine the historicity of colonial effects; an “imaginative outside” of the colonality, which is to argue that we don’t have to permanently live under the shadow of colonialism. That is, postcolonial studies has to reconnect to its tradition, reclaim its genealogical root, to recharge its originating critical spirit, i.e., Marxism. Without

reinventing tradition, we have no ground to stand on; without root, we do not know where we have come from; without critical spirit, we will only flow with the dominant currents to become reactive and reactionary. Marxism is the unifying link of forces between the imperial centers (already past or otherwise) and the semi-, ex-, or still colonies. A newer kind of Marxism could multiply its objects of identification as well as its enemies-structures, no longer simply based on class politics of the narrower type. Contemporary pan-leftist social movements of gays and lesbian, bi- and trans-sexual, feminist, labor, farmer, environmental, aboriginal, anti-racist and anti-war groups have to work together and identify with each other cross neo-colonial borders, so as to collectively confront the global structures of heterosexism, sexism, capitalism, racism, ethnicism, and statism and super-statism. Subject positions and identities are produced by, and are effects and product of, these structures, not the other round. If we truly believe in the possibility of abolishing these structures of colonization (i.e., oppression and domination), then postcolonial studies have to be able to think and move beyond identity politics of any sorts to avoid territorialization of subjectivities and subjective positions; without charting such imaginary space outside the structures of colonization, we will fall back on the peaceful-coexistence logic of multiculturalism and will be defeated by the power blocs, locally and globally.

By now, I hope it becomes clear what I meant by decolonization. If decolonization, at this historical conjuncture, no longer simply means the struggle for national independence but a struggle to abolish any form of colonization, then postcolonial/cultural studies has to recognize that 1) structurally, neo-colonialism, neo-imperialism, and globalization are the continuity and extension of colonialism (in the wider sense of the word, meaning any structure of domination); 2) colonialism is not yet a legacy, as mainstream postcolonial studies would have it, but still lives and operates in any geo-colonial sites on the level of the cultural imaginary and identification, and reconfigures itself to reshape the colonial cultural imaginary in the changing historical process of encounters (i.e., regionalization, the shift from the Atlantic to the Pacific, etc.). That is to say, colonialism, engineered by the apparatus of capitalism, still covers the entire globe. The decolonization task of a postcolonial/cultural studies would then mean to deconstruct, decenter, deform, debunk, and disarticulate the colonial cultural imaginary produced in the historical processes, and to reconstruct, rearticulate, and reconnect more democratic kinds of imaginative lines of flight. In short, decolonization no longer refers to the objective historical movement in structure, but in action in subjectivity, thought, cultural forms of expression, social institutions, and global political-economic structures. I have no intention to argue that the only mission for cultural studies is decolonization, but I do believe that, to decolonize the colonial cultural imaginary (nationalism, nativism and civilizationalism) so as to free colonizing and colonized subjects from co-

lonial history is one way, and only one way, to set an agenda for a politically charged postcolonial cultural studies. As practitioners of cultural studies (lower case, without capitalizing the words), we have to see ourselves as the articulating agents and linking points of decolonization to continue that tradition of critical cultural studies; our research and discursive practices have to become the critical forces of that incomplete project of decolonization, at least to decolonize ourselves.

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Notes

Author's Note: As one of the active members of the Journal of Communication Inquiry (JCI) in the mid 1980's, I am ambivalently happy to see the transition that JCI is making. The journal has been an "alternative" space, through and through, ever since its initial stage: the critical intellectual autonomy has been its mark. JCI's important function was, from mid 1970s onward, to open up new critical spaces. We did it, and we are still proud for what we had done. Professor Hanno Hardt has been, of course, instrumental throughout the process, to keep the open space and decision making to the graduate student editor; without Hanno's maneuvering behind the scene to support us, the Journal might have been dead long ago. This is not to say JCI was a Hanno Hardt journal, definitely not. But Hanno did give the Journal a coherency (i.e., being critical) and a sense of direction. That's all. With those conditions, we had been able to work out its shape collectively, concurrent with the mood of the 107 (graduate student office) intellectuality. The tradition, as far as I could recall out of my limited memories, of the cruelty of Marxism, through the hands of Pat Daley, Jacky Cartier, Bob Craig, Bev James, Dave Tetzlaff, among others, did manage to carry on.

The idea of handing over JCI to a commercial publisher, so as to achieve wider circulation, has always been there. But could we still maintain editorial autonomy? Would "they" intervene to block out critical and alternative elements? What would happen if JCI shifted its intellectual tradition from an alternative voice to a commodity? What might this mean? Well, it never happened and we did not really have to worry about that. Now, with the commercial press coming in, the same set of questions can still be asked. We just have to wait and see whether Sage will any good to JCI, or to destroy its momentum. I personally do not know the answer, but will keep on observing. I do, however, trust the Hanno Hardt mode of behaving, advising and supervising. With his presence, JCI should be fine.

It is timely that JCI takes on the responsibility to rethink the cultural studies project. Without intimate contacts with North America academic circle ever since

coming home in 1989, I do, nonetheless, feel cultural studies practiced in the American campuses are somehow running into trouble, especially in the literary vein's appropriation: de-politicizing, de-historicizing, de-theorizing. Disjuncted, disrupted, dispersed, cultural studies seems to be no longer a viable political project. Academic market demand, institutionalization, along the side of pc identity politics and the conserve turn of the American public life, cultural studies, in short, is in deep trouble.

But let's not over-essentialize the fault-lines of cultural studies. Good, energetic, critical work has been done under that banner. Without the cultural studies moment, the whole generation of 1980's generation graduate students could have been sucked completely into the deconstructive-poststructuralist fashion pool. How to regain its edge, theoretical and political, could be the focal zone of debate in the American academy. To give it up entirely without a concrete displacing umbrella project is self-defeating. Yes, indeed, I am implicated and invested in the sign/project of cultural studies. Not only because I myself was responsible for the Stuart Hall special issue of JCI, which helped the flight of cultural studies in the 1980's, but because I was and still am deeply influenced by that critical Marxist vein of cultural studies; and profoundly and proudly so. Without that open-ended "training" and "spirit", I could not have done intellectual intervention work back home. I do take note of my hybrid "anglo-american" Marxist elements in my own writings and practices (which has been the constant problems to be "cured", with and without too much success—the erasability of one's cultural subjectivity), and passionately feel the necessity to continue that "internationalist" line of thinking and acting.

But, geo-politically, a generation of us, the so called "third world intellectuals, educated in the USA", did in some ways depart from the dominant mode of cultural studies practices in the US (i.e., locked within the campus walls), largely in response to our own specific politico-cultural conjuncture of the local. What I have to say in this particular essay can be read as an attempt to articulate and confront the dialectic between local history and neo-colonial forces. Whether it's a simple departure or an intricate line of flight, the readers will have the power to decide. At the same time, I do also recognize the necessity not to territorize the geo-colonial spaces, but to construct new alternative possibility that "we", on the internationalist-localist left, could work together to face the confusing yet clear directional flow of the world.

In short, I do feel that obligation to contribute to the JCI tradition, even with that slightest reservation and hesitation. But without risk, new lines could not fly. Let JCI get on with its critical work.

1 The fact, that these "other" papers are mostly generated outside the English speaking contexts, says something about the global knowledge production system.

2 I am appropriating Chris Connery's (1996) formulation of the "oceanic feeling" here.

3 See the "Declaration of the People's Conference Against Imperialist Globalization," November 23, 1995, Manila.

4 See for instance, the recent publication of eight volumes of *Modern Japan and Its Colonies*, released by Iwanami publisher (Tokyo), 1993.

5 Given the limit of space here, I could in no way escape from reductive account of these forms.

6 Nandy puts it, "The broad psychological contours of colonialism are now known. Thanks to sensitive writers like Octave Mannoni, Frantz Fanon and Albert Memmi were even know something about the interpersonal patterns which consti-

tuted the colonial situation, particularly in Africa. Less well known are the cultural and psychological pathologies produced by colonization in the colonizing societies" (*The Intimate Enemy*, 1983:30). Then he goes on to analyze India.

7 For detailed analysis on Nandy and Huntington, see Chen, Kuan-Hsing (1996), "Civilizationalist Imagination: Huntington and Nandy," in Lee Yu-cheng (ed.), *History and Theory of Cultural Studies*, Taipei: Academia Sinica.

8 For a detailed account, see Chen (forthcoming).

9 See for instance, Wang (1995), an edited volume in response to Huntington. Moreover, he was invited to Singapore and Malaysia to debate with "Asian" scholars in September 1997.

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